

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 25

AVIATION WEEK & SPACE TECHNOLOGY
29 November 1982

Defense Dept. Reviews Lie Detector Use

Washington—U. S. Defense Dept. is reviewing its 1975 directive on internal security, particularly in the wider use of lie detectors in screening personnel and in tracking down security breaches and leaks to the press.

A draft directive, sent by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy to the Office of Personnel Management (formerly Civil Service Commission) for comment, promptly was leaked to the Washington Post.

This reopened intense public discussion that started last January when Deputy Defense Secretary Frank C. Carlucci asked members of the Defense Resources Board to volunteer for polygraph tests in an effort to find a Defense budget leak (AW&ST Jan. 18, p. 15).

Once the Post printed the story, it was left to Under Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Henry E. Catto, Jr., to face a blizzard of questions at a Pentagon briefing. Here are some of them, with his answers:

Q: Are you saying here that this change is aimed not at news leaks but at espionage? Is that what you are saying?

A: I'm saying that what we want to do is try to minimize and let's keep it in mind that there is no change yet, that's the first thing. If something does take place, it will be to minimize the leakage of sensitive information to our opponents abroad. . . .

Q: There is a substantial body of opinion not solely shared by reporters that you tell much too little about how you are spending their money. You determine what is secret and damaging to the country and then you lie detector people when you say it gets out because you say it goes to the enemies of the people, though you won't give us an example.

A: Well, I think that the first thing to keep in mind here is that the members of the press are not disinterested in this. You are not a disinterested party because you are the primary beneficiaries of the very problem that we are seeking to cure.

Q: The primary beneficiaries are the readers.

A: No, the primary beneficiaries are those of you who are engaged in a very vigorous professional competition in order to get the news to the people. So I don't think you can ever look at it quite the same as we do. . . . We all agree that Defense Dept. cannot and should not publish everything that is going on. You all would like to know as much as possible. What happens in between is a very gray area [that] is an art form to determine where to set the parameters. . . . Keeping in mind always the need and right of the public to know and the temptation of bureaucrats to cover up, because it exists, we have to balance that against a very real national security problem that we have. . . . Espionage is a factor, I don't think there's any question on that.

Q: How are polygraphs going to solve that problem?

A: Polygraphs can help pinpoint a quaint custom of [the Pentagon] which is the arrogating to oneself, if one is an employee, the right to determine what shall be classified and what shall not be. We think that this has to be an orderly process, not one that is subject to the whims or political persuasion or prejudices of an individual who may disagree, for whatever reason, with a decision that's about to be taken and who may want to sway congressional opinion or whatever, i.e., we want to discourage people with hidden agendas, from free use of that kind of leak in order to, outside the democratic process, determine what's going to be known and what's not. . . .

Q: Can we have a look at the directive since it is not classified and we all would like to enter into the debate?

A: I think you have done rather nicely already. I mean, speaking blind. You have done a nice job.

Q: So you would have no objections to handing out the directive?

A: I'm not prepared to declassify the directive.

Q: It's not classified.

A: I'll take that under consideration.